

The Red Cross is for those who suffer

War has not brought new sufferings, but it has enormously multiplied suffering and has caused misery to fall in new places and in horrible combinations.

The old who were protected, the children who were sheltered, the women who were cherished, have been called upon to endure to the uttermost. Upon those countries exhausted in death grips the blows have fallen hardest; upon those least able to meet them calamities have piled upon calamities. It happens that this full load of tragedy has not fallen upon us, but it happens by the same token we may help to meet it.

The Red Cross aims to be where human needs are, and to act as its individual members would, could they be present and endowed with the same means.

The Red Cross is helping our soldiers and sailors in a practical way. It is helping the comfort and the spirit of our Allies, and in both these things it is helping to shorten the war by rendering more effective the service of the armed forces of all the Allies.

But beyond its practical help it is dedicated to the alleviation of human suffering, and this

war has given splendid evidence, through the Red Cross, of the spirit of the American people, the spirit of simple human kindness, toward suffering wherever encountered. The daily record of incidents which the widespread Red Cross organization meets suggests how universal is the need for help. The need is so vast that only a universal answer can cope with it.

Children

THE spirit of the children of France makes doubly worth while the efforts of the Red Cross to save them. Major Murphy tells this story:

"I remember I was at one time outside Popering. I went there to a little home which was maintained for refugees. It was a hospital and a home. I saw soldiers—a mutilated soldier was walking across the lawn, and he was leading by the hand a little boy about eight years old who had a bandage over his eyes. That child had been blinded by a German shell, and they had to take out both of his eyes.

"He did not know he was blind. He thought it was the bandage; and even when they took the bandage off he still thought there was something tied over his eyes. He was very happy, and had no idea of the seriousness of the situation. While standing there talking to this soldier, the little fellow put his bandaged head down on the ground and turned a somersault. There is so much of that spirit over there."

IN THE ordinary course of a day's work, a Red Cross official sent in this report to the Paris headquarters:

"There arrived last week at Evian, where the repatriates from France and Belgium are received back into France, a train loaded with Belgian children.

"There were 680 of them—thin, sickly, from four to twelve years of age—children of men who refused to work for the Germans and of mothers who let their children go rather than have them starve. They poured off the train, little ones clinging to the older ones, girls all crying, boys trying to cheer. They had come all the long way alone.

"On the platform were the Red Cross workers to meet them. The children who could walk at all marched along crying, 'Meat, meat; we are going to have meat.' Their little clawlike hands were significant, but a doctor said, 'We have them in time; a few weeks of proper feeding and they will pull up.' Thirty per cent. of the older repatriates die the first month from exhaustion. The children can and must be saved."

THESE trains that pull into Evian are laden with the too-young and the too-old for German purposes. On their arrival the repatriates are registered, washed, given fit clothing and food, and put to sleep in clean beds. Thousands and thousands of these repatriates have known the blessing of Red Cross help. The story of Gaston is typical.

Gaston is a little boy aged seven, who walks with a crutch. His father had gone to fight the Boche; his mother managed to keep the home until a certain day when the siren blew. That day Gaston and his sister were playing in the yard and ran to the cellar when they heard the first blast. They had been told to do so. When the siren ceased they went back to play in the yard.

Then something happened, and for days after he came out of the hospital Gaston couldn't for the life of him remember what it was.

The thing that dropped in the yard tore away one leg and mangled his sister.

While he was in the hospital his mother disappeared. So they put Gaston on a train for Evian.

The Red Cross nurse was helping Gaston along the road—he handled his crutch awkwardly as yet—when a woman shrieked and gathered the cripple to her bosom.

Few mothers and children among the repatriates are so blessed with fortune. Tens of thousands of them will never know the bliss of such reunions.

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THE school children of France have learned to slip on their gas masks as handily as their fathers in the trenches. The regions under gas fire are growing with the increasing range of the big guns, for more and more of the shells are gas shells.

No matter how constant this menace is, or how near to the lines a town may be, the future of the French boys and girls is not neglected, and the schools go on. But the day's routine is varied by the drills, when, at a given signal, gas masks are slipped on, just as at other signals, which mean bombardment, the children run to the cellars or fall flat on the floor to protect themselves.

When the Red Cross began to help these children, it was found that many of them were mere infants, some less than one year old. The tinier children could not manage the gas masks, and for these and for the children who had been herded together in old barracks, dirty and practically unfurnished, and with no sanitary appliances, the Red Cross established a home at Toul, where hundreds of tots are brought from the dangerous districts and saved from the death which would almost certainly overtake them were they left in their homes.

THE American Red Cross is caring to-day, in one way or another, for 50,000 French children. It is the hope of the Red Cross, in co-operation with the French Government, to save the lives of 40,000 infants a year.

Serbia

CRUSHED by the combined Austrian-German advance, the nation of Serbia was overrun; its population forced into exile or left in the hands of the invader. Serbia was no longer a vital military factor in the war. The contribution of the American Red Cross to the people of Serbia is an expression of human kindness on the part of the American people to a suffering nation.

When the Red Cross Mission went to Serbia, the Austrian atrocities had reached their zenith. The Austrians had set themselves to annihilate that nation. In some places the people were driven by soldiers with fixed bayonets into courtyards of the schools and there shot down. In others, they were tied in groups to haystacks which were then set on fire. Victims were left hanging by scores to village trees.

There is a little strip of Serbia in the neighborhood of Monastir that has been saved from the invader, and it is here the Red Cross is helping what is left of Serbia. There are 21,000 acres of fertile plain in this district, and to this district the Red Cross is sending enough seeds and farm machinery to assure the production of thousands of bushels of barley, rye, potatoes and other food produce this year.

The 50,000 Serbians huddled into this district will become self-supporting. The medical assistance, the sanitary help necessary to these women children and old men, is being provided. There is hope for at least this little remnant of a brave people.

Roumania

COMPARABLE with Serbia is the case of Roumania. Rendered helpless by the enemy advance, Roumania, too, gave the Red Cross an opportunity not for making a nation more effective for war, but rather a chance to help a stricken people without hope of gain.

The Red Cross Mission to Roumania found conditions impossible to describe; found inhabitants picking wild grass for food. In the little village of Seltiu, a squalid shack of wood and mud was occupied by three little children. Their mother had succumbed to typhus. Their father was a soldier at the front. The eldest, a girl of ten, was acting as mother to a boy of four and a little sister of seven. The boy was lying helpless on a bag on the stone floor, his face eaten partly away by a malignant skin disease. The bones stuck out all over his tiny body. The girl was little better off. There were neither relatives, friends, nor any Government agency to give relief to these unfortunate children.

While it could, the Red Cross strove with all its might to bring relief to this stricken land. But the determination of Roumania and the help of the Red Cross was not sufficient proof against the trying conditions which Roumania faced, and the last chapter of American Red Cross help for Roumania was written when the Queen of Roumania recently cabled the Red Cross:

"At this hour in the midst of tragic events my thoughts turn with gratitude towards those who in anxious days, but when there was still hope, came to my aid. I wish once more to thank the American Red Cross for the splendid way in which it answered my appeal of a few months ago. A terrible fate has obliged Colonel Anderson, who was ready to remain in spite of adverse circumstances, to leave with all his unit. The work the American Red Cross Mission did amongst our wounded and amongst the suffering population is unforgettable to me and my people. Now that my country has to remain alone and forsaken, I wish once more to raise my voice and to thank all those who helped me, and to ask that we and our nation should not be forgotten. I ask of the great heart of America to remember Roumania, if even for a while. Strangled, her cries will not reach it, and her tears will have to be wept in secret."

MARIE, QUEEN OF ROUMANIA.

These are the situations that, multiplied almost without limit, challenge the American Red Cross. The story of Red Cross help must necessarily be told in totals, but for each unit there is a terrible and pathetic story. Where the symbol of the American Red Cross goes there is the reminder to bruised souls that the long miles between cannot separate suffering from American sympathy.

Then there is the great faith that America, rich with a wealth greater than any, with her territory undisturbed, can and will move with the spirit of devotion of which the Red Cross is a symbol and to which it is a servant.

This is the last of a series of five announcements covering the work of the Red Cross.

Red Cross Chapters have statements showing in detail how the War Fund is being expended. Ask your Chapter for these statements.

✚ The American Red Cross ✚

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Announcement Number 5

The cost of this space has been specially contributed by a friend of the American Red Cross.